

## 3.8 Economic Development, Culture, and Education

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Similar to other communities in the region, Bee Cave unemployment rates are low and job growth is strong in comparison to national averages. According to ESRI estimates by location, there were over 670 businesses in Bee Cave with more than 6,200 employees in 2016. For a city of its size, Bee Cave has a relatively high daytime employee population, due to the fact that Bee Cave has become a regional shopping and entertainment destination. With very low property tax rates, the City of Bee Cave relies on its sales tax revenue to fund a large proportion of the City's day to day services. The ratio of employees to the residential population ratio is about 0.93 employees for every one resident, which is higher than nearby Lakeway, Austin, and Travis County. However, due largely to the high cost of housing only a small proportion of those employed in Bee Cave reside in the community.

According to the Texas Labor Market and the BLS data, unemployment in the Austin-Round Rock MSA was at a very low 3.5% in 2016. Bee Cave's unemployment rate was estimated at 3.2%. Total employment in the City of Austin, Travis County and Bee Cave has continued to grow, with the annual increase of about 2.4%.

#### Business Mix in Bee Cave

The largest categories of business establishments in Bee Cave in 2016 (by SIC code) consisted of services (33%), retail trade (31%), and finance, insurance and real estate (15%). Just over 50% of employees working in Bee Cave are employed in retail trade. According to Census estimates, many of the businesses located in the City are considered small businesses; 79% have fewer than 10 employees and 63% have fewer than 5 employees.

Most businesses in Bee Cave are clustered in the commercial areas located in the Hill Country Galleria, the Shops at the Galleria, and along major roadways (SH 71, 620, and 2244). These retail areas generate a significant amount of tax revenue for the City and are important for serving the residents of Bee Cave and as a regional draw for the surrounding area. Areas of commercial development generally coincide with existing Commercial, Retail, and Neighborhood Services zoning districts.



Hill Country Galleria Storefronts

### Where are we now?

- Strong retail economy supports city and community services
- Highly educated, entrepreneurship spirit
- Ongoing investment in residential and retail markets
- Retail trade and services make up 60% of business establishments

### What is our Vision?

- Balance in our array of residential and commercial land uses.
- Investment in education, recreation and sports, and opportunities for engagement in civic affairs.
- Vibrant arts and cultural scene; local events, festivals, and family-friendly activities that reflect the uniqueness of the community.
- Government is resident-friendly and business-friendly and prides itself on its professionalism, transparency, responsiveness and its efficient provision of public services and facilities.

## *In 2015, sales tax revenue comprised over 82% of the City's total annual revenue.*

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, residents have commented on the need for more diversity in the types of businesses in Bee Cave, including more diversity in local “things to do” / entertainment, recreation, retail, and restaurants.

The Backyard is legendary as one of the popular music entertainment venues in the entire Austin region and for putting Bee Cave “on the map.” The original music venue closed several years ago and is now planned for redevelopment as a new mixed-use destination that may once again feature live music. The redevelopment has the potential to generate a significant amount of investment and increased visitation, as well as employment activity in Bee Cave. The expansion of hotels in the City are increasing the importance of tourism in the local economy and also bring in substantial bed tax revenue that will be available to invest to further develop tourism and the hospitality industry.

### **Economic Development Organizations**

There are two primary organizations in Bee Cave leading economic development activity in the City, the Economic Development Board (EDB) and the Bee Cave Chamber of Commerce. The EDB formed in 2002 and has played a pivotal role in the growth of the City. Funded by a sales and use tax, the EDB has successfully pursued and developed major community projects in Bee Cave including Central Park, Bee Cave Parkway, and Hike and Bike Connectivity Plan. The Bee Cave Chamber of Commerce's activities consist of city branding and promotion, business development, community development, networking business to business, city processes for businesses, and community service. In 2015, there were 67 member businesses of the Bee Cave Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the Lake Travis Chamber of Commerce serves the Bee Cave businesses and the larger region.

### **CULTURE**

Bee Cave City Hall and the adjacent library contain several city services that act as the center of civic activity in Bee Cave. The building contains City Council Chambers, municipal court functions, City offices, and the Public Library (which hosts a variety of events that bring the community). In addition, Bee Cave Central Park and the Sculpture Park Exhibit both provide opportunities for recreation and community interaction. The only outdoor public art venue in the area, the Sculpture Park Exhibit features work from nationally recognized artists for public enjoyment.

The Bee Cave Arts Foundation is a community-based non-profit working to bring art to Bee Cave as a mean of improving the quality of life and increasing awareness, education, and integration of many aspects of art throughout public spaces. Bee Cave Foundation manages the Sculpture Park Exhibit and other popular activities – including a summer Art Camp, the Annual Sculpture Park Celebration, and year-round art classes. The summer Art Camp is volunteer-based and draws students from around the City and region and includes fun and lively art shows each year. In addition, the Arts Foundation is working on a concept for a “Playarium” to expand the concept of the sculpture park and create a new whimsical sculpture playground with the intention of creating a fun and educational environment for kids to play. As discussed in the previous section, the Backyard redevelopment could serve as a central arts and cultural district for Bee Cave in the future.

The City has a rich and interesting history. The community derived its name from the colonies of Mexican honeybees that lived in the banks of Barton Creek and Little Barton Creek that encompassed a large area of Western Travis County. Historic sites described in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan include:

- The Bohls Cabins located at the confluence of Barton Creek and Little Barton Creek were the first settler structures built in the area in the mid-1800s. Some of the original structures exist today and are located at the entrance to Spanish Oaks.
- Lallier Store (Old Post Office) built in 1873 to provide settlers with necessary supplies and later served as a post office.

- Bee Cave Schoolhouse, built in 1882, was one of the first schools in the area and served only five to six students at a time.
- Bee Cave Baptist Church, built in 1927, is still active today.

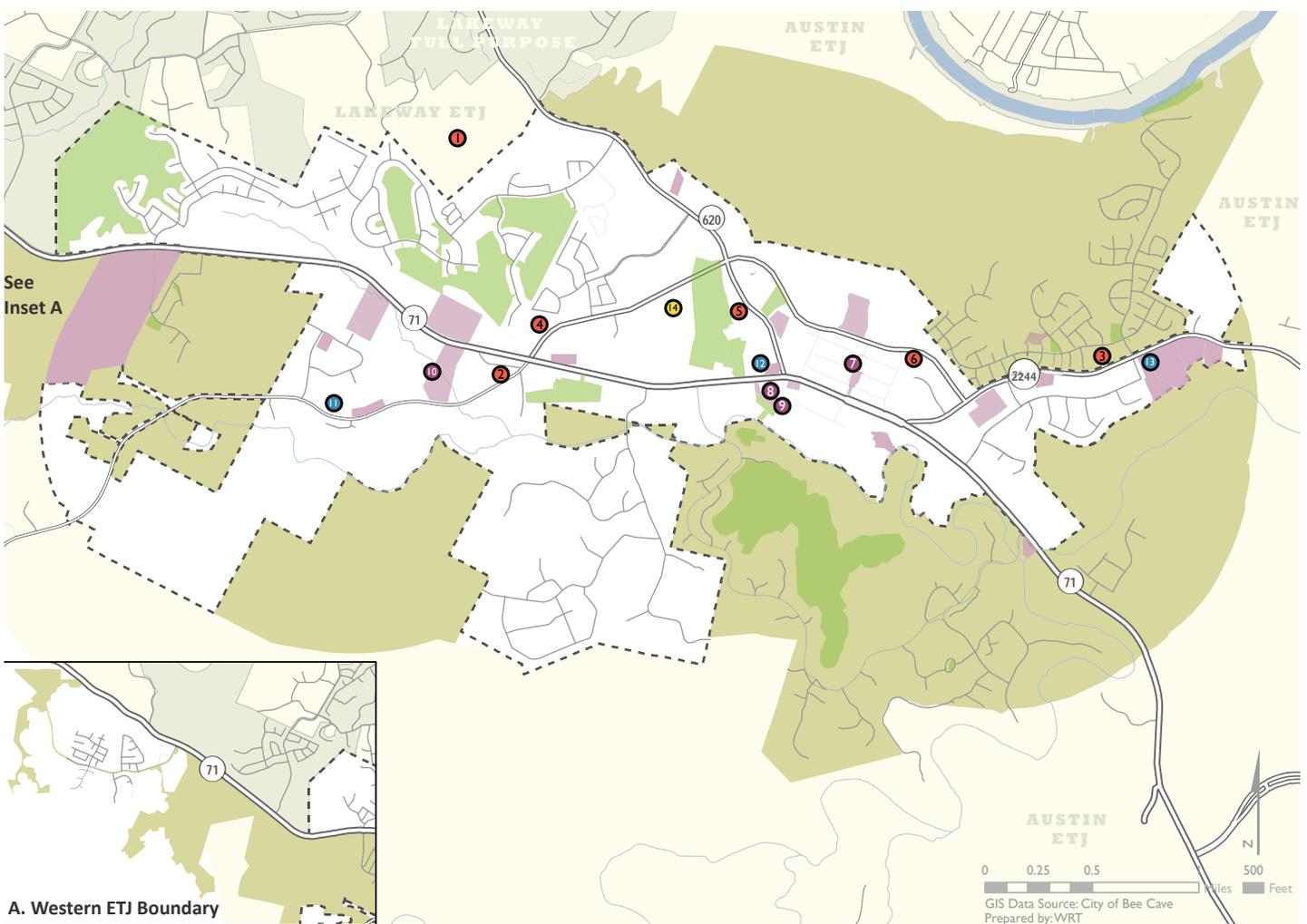
In addition, there are three churches within Bee Cave and an estimated nine private historical cemeteries that exist within the City and its ETJ area. None of the historic resources in Bee Cave appear on the National Register of Historic Places. Only one, the Bee Cave Baptist Church,

is listed on the Texas Historical Commission Historic Sites atlas. Overall, there is little information or signage describing the City’s historic resources.

### EDUCATION

Bee Cave’s public education is provided by the Lake Travis Independent School District (LTISD), which serves the communities of Bee Cave and Lakeway and surrounding areas. In 2015, total enrollment was about 8,800 students within the LTISD, an increase of 34% over five years. The district currently has six

Figure 3-11: Cultural Facilities



#### Selected Land Uses

- ◆ Public and Institutional
- ◆ Parks and Open Space

#### Education

- ① Lake Travis High School
- ② Bee Cave Elementary School
- ③ Lake Point Elementary School
- ④ Bright Horizons Pre-school
- ⑤ Lake Hills Montessori School
- ⑥ Primrose School of Bee Cave

#### Civic

- ⑦ Bee Cave City Hall
- ⑧ Lake Travis Fire and Rescue
- ⑨ Bee Cave Police Department
- ⑩ Travis County Parks Office

#### Churches

- ⑪ Presbyterian Church of Lake Travis
- ⑫ Bee Caves Baptist Church
- ⑬ Lake Hills Church

#### Entertainment

- ⑭ Outdoor Music Venue

elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The student population at “build-out” is projected to be about 20,800 students, an increase of about 136% projected by 2032. To keep up with the projected student population growth, LTISD long range plan includes plans to build at least one new elementary school, a new middle school, and a new high school within the next 10-15+ years. LTISD schools are highly ranked and the desirability of schools in the region is one of the factors driving population growth and development. The district plans for 10-20 years in the future, while bond elections are typically for 5 years periods to fund needed capital improvements. LTISD has a record of gaining community support for its capital facilities planning, and works closely with residents and parents through the ongoing planning phases. LTISD is funded by property taxes.

The City of Bee Cave currently contains one elementary school, Bee Cave Elementary, located on Hamilton Pool Road. Lake Point Elementary is located on Bee Cave

Road within the City’s ETJ and Lake Travis High School is located just north of Bee Cave and adjacent to the Falconhead development on RR 620 (see Figure 3-11). LTISD is planning to locate a new middle school in Bee Cave at SH 71 and Vail Divide Drive, and is currently working on preliminary site plans.

In addition to its public schools, Bee Cave also has private childcare, pre-school, and Pre-K programs. There are no colleges or universities located within Bee Cave, but Concordia University-Texas, Saint Edward’s University, The University of Texas at Austin, and Austin Community College District are within twenty miles of the City.

In terms of educational attainment, Bee Cave is a highly educated city. The majority of residents, 62% over the 25 years of age, have a bachelor’s degree, 25% of the population has a graduate level degree, and 99% have a high school diploma. This is in contrast to the State of Texas where only 27% have completed a bachelor’s degree or higher.



*Bee Cave Elementary School*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE, AND EDUCATION GOALS & STRATEGIES

### Goal ECE-1:

Strengthen and diversify the employment base in Bee Cave.

Increasing economic diversity is often a goal of communities interested creating a stronger, more stable and resilient economy. Bee Cave is fortunate to have a significant retail base of employers that make up the majority of business within the City and support a large percentage of the City's budget through its local sales tax. Retail performance in the City has been strong in the past; however, there is always the risk that retail sales could decline as the result of a recession, economic losses of major retailers, or some other factors. A loss of projected sales tax revenue would then require the City to consider cutting services or change its taxing or funding structure. Many communities across the country are seeking to diversify their economic base to reduce exposure to risk. In addition, the growth of locally owned or operated businesses often generates a substantial share of revenue that is recirculated and spent locally, ultimately reinvesting in a city's economy.

- 8.1 Strengthen and diversify the office / employment space offerings in Bee Cave to include more varied opportunities for emerging needs such as co-working, small business, and entrepreneur incubator space. The City should encourage the development of co-working or drop-in shared office space that would address the needs of Bee Cave's teleworkers, entrepreneurs, and small home based businesses, particularly given the high percentage of residents working from home.
- 8.2 Encourage the expansion of local, community-serving retail and entertainment type businesses that meet the needs of residents. (See also FLU 1.9). Bee Cave can consider a variety of approaches to support local businesses, including developing a "New Resident" guide to provide information on community resources and local businesses.

*A significant portion of Bee Cave residents work from home (16% in 2014), or would strongly consider the idea. Developing a co-working space could foster entrepreneurship and local businesses, strengthen the sense of community, and help ease traffic and congestion.*

- 8.3 Promote the attractiveness and stability of commercial and employment areas through improved development standards and by addressing obsolescence and redevelopment. (See also FLU 1.10). The City should continue to foster public-private partnerships that both enhance local quality of life and strengthen the economy. Investments in public space and facilities, including trails, plazas and landscape areas, signage, and public art help to create places where people want to spend time and ultimately support local businesses.
- 8.4 Increase the economic impact and importance of local cultural and historic resources in Bee Cave. As tourism continues to grow in Bee Cave, the City should work with local tourism based businesses and the Chambers of Commerce to develop a tourism and hospitality strategy, including the priorities for the use of hotel tax revenues as the industry grows.

### Goal ECE-2:

Promote and enhance arts, cultural, and historic resources in Bee Cave.

The City has a number of historic and cultural resources that could become a greater part of Bee Cave's identity. Public art is playing an increasing role in outdoor spaces in the "Benches" at the Hill Country Galleria and in the Bee Cave Sculpture Park. Arts and cultural strategies can play a significant role in the physical and social identity of a place, particularly in a city like Bee Cave that places great value in its character and identity. The City's current landscape, the scale of buildings, natural materials, and local art and artists or special

places and views are all part of the identity of Bee Cave. Bee Cave could enhance its resources in a number of different ways, including public art, the design of public infrastructure, and arts and cultural education and programming.

- 8.5 Recognize the City’s cultural and historic resources through research and documentation. In addition, Bee Cave could work with property owners on a coordinated signage program and online resource guide.
- 8.6 Ensure the protection and maintenance of historic cemeteries through coordination with property owners, public access, requiring setbacks from surrounding uses, and increasing public awareness of these sites. In updating the City’s ordinances, Bee Cave should consider special protection standards to encourage the protection and use of sites from surrounding development.
- 8.7 Continue to partner with Bee Cave Arts Foundation, businesses, and other organizations to support exposure to a variety of arts and cultural programs and education in Bee Cave. Potential projects include a series of festivals or arts-related events to celebrate the history and culture of Bee Cave.
- 8.8 Promote growth of community-based entertainment businesses and “things to do” in Bee Cave that strengthen the City’s arts and cultural resources.
- 8.9 Support the integration of public art within community buildings, streetscapes, parks, and open spaces.

**Goal ECE-3:**

Coordinate excellent, comprehensive educational opportunities in Bee Cave.

Bee Cave’s public schools are considered some of the best in the area, and many new residents are attracted to the region because of its educational offerings. The City can continue to partner and coordinate with LTISD in its strategic and long-range planning work. Schools can expand their role in the community by becoming life-long centers of learning and community building, through volunteer opportunities that engage parents and community leaders with students and teachers. Creating a healthier community and better health outcomes begins with children and there are many examples of partnerships between health and wellness providers and schools to enhance understanding and interest in healthy foods and active lifestyles.

- 8.10 Continue to coordinate with LTISD on future school district expansion plans, including the design of new school, facilities, and transportation and access plans. Work with LTISD to increase safe and connected walking, bicycle, and vehicle access to and from schools.
- 8.11 Seek out partnerships with Bee Cave schools to support community health and safe access to schools. The City can encourage partnerships between local health providers and LTISD area schools to develop new opportunities for learning about community health, as well as help to develop “Safe Routes to Schools” programs.
- 8.12 Provide diverse opportunities for life-long learning through public facilities (including the library and City Hall) and parks.